

**Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum (APPF)**

**27<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting**

**Draft Resolution Sponsored by Australia**

**Enhancing cooperation among Member States to build strong institutions for promoting trade and investment growth (Luke Hartsuyker MP)**

The 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum:

**Noting** the Resolution APPF26/RES/02 on “Promoting Economic Growth and Free Trade”, as well as the Resolution APPF26/RES/04 on “The Role of Parliaments in Promoting Seamless Regional Economic Integration” adopted at the 26<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum (APPF) in Hanoi in 2018;

**Recognising** that trade and investment are important drivers of sustainable and balanced growth, in providing access to digital and other emerging technologies, as well as linking domestic firms, including micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), to global value chains, and enhancing productivity and innovation;

**Acknowledging** that global trade and investment is underpinned by the multilateral trading system with the World Trade Organisation (WTO) at its centre, and that cooperation is needed among Member States to uphold that system and work to reform the rules-based WTO, which plays an important role in facilitating and safeguarding trade;

**Cognisant** that protectionism has been rising, that the rules governing global trade are under challenge, and this may have a destabilising impact on APPF Member States;

**Emphasising** that Member States are encouraged to work collaboratively to improve the WTO so that it can address current and future challenges;

**Emphasising** the importance of promoting the role of multilateral institutions in facilitating free, rules-based trade and investment;

**Recalling** the Bogor Declaration of 1994, which established a common goal of free trade and investment in the Asia-Pacific among Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) economies by 2020;

**Recognising** that free trade agreements of the APPF Member States contribute to common prosperity and sustainable economic growth in the region;

**Also acknowledging** the intensification of public debate in many parts of the world regarding trade liberalisation;

**Welcoming** the outcome of APEC 2018 and the 26<sup>th</sup> APEC Economic Leaders’ Meeting in November 2018 in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, with a focus on inclusive growth and the benefits of the digital economy;

**Welcoming** the outcome of the G20 Summit in Buenos Aires, Argentina in December 2018, particularly the recognition that international trade and investment are important engines

of growth, productivity, innovation, job creation and development, the contribution that the multilateral trading system has made to that end, and the support for reform of the WTO to improve its functioning;

**Underscoring** that free trade agreements establish rules and standards by which market access for trade and investment can be more transparent and predictable;

**Recognising** that today's global trade is multi-faceted and complex, involving investment and capital flows, supply- and value-chains, movement of labour, connectivity and digitisation, e-commerce, knowledge-transfers, as well as considerations related to women's economic empowerment, labour standards, opportunities for youth, skills-development, diversity and inclusivity, environmental protection, and sustainable development;

**Confirming** the role of parliaments of APPF Member States in creating an enabling environment to strengthen institutions that underpin trade and investment in the Asia-Pacific;

**Affirming** that the APPF is a key platform for strengthening cooperation and understanding about regional economic and trade matters;

**RESOLVES TO:**

**Promote** further work to build strong institutions that promote trade and investment growth, and unlock opportunities for further regional economic integration in order to achieve sustainable and inclusive growth;

**Confirm** that the main objectives of trade and investment growth in Asia and the Pacific are improving prosperity, living standards and quality of life through economic growth;

**Call** on Member States to step up efforts toward economic prosperity in the region by embracing open trade and investment and facilitating the free movement of goods, services and capital, as well as establishing quality standards, rules and guidelines;

**Call** on Member States to strengthen their capacity to engage in negotiations of high-quality comprehensive FTAs, and to support the rules-based, free, and transparent multilateral trading system underpinned by the WTO;

**Support** the negotiation and implementation of bilateral and multilateral free trade agreements within the Asia-Pacific region;

**Call** on Member States to fight against all forms of protectionism;

**Welcome** the positive developments in economic integration in the Asia-Pacific region involving APPF Member States, including the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), and continuing negotiations of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and the Pacific Alliance;

**Affirm** the determination of APPF Member States to establish a seamless and comprehensively connected and integrated economy in the Asia-Pacific through policy collaboration on trade and investment liberalisation and business facilitation;

**Affirm** the cooperation between APPF Member States to develop various growth drivers such as infrastructure, energy, digital and telecommunications, and financial services;

**Call** on Member States to build a favourable regulatory framework that strengthens the competitiveness of MSMEs;

**Call** on Member States to explore initiatives that increase the usage of digital platforms in order to unleash the potential of the digital economy in the region, and promote the development and utilisation of e-commerce in the Asia-Pacific through supporting the strengthening of a favourable, transparent and stable legal environment and policies for cross-border e-commerce;

**Request** Parliaments of the APPF Member States to strive for transparent, predictable and non-discriminatory policies for business and investment in conformity with WTO agreements;

**Foster** public support for the goals of free and open trade and investment;

**Encourage** opportunities for interaction between Parliaments of the APPF Member States and between Parliaments and business communities through dialogues, conferences, seminars and other exchange channels for better understanding of ways to improve the WTO so that it better reflects contemporary trading practices.

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